



## NAVIGATING INTERNATIONALISM FROM BUENOS AIRES

THE CENTRO DE ARTE Y COMUNICACIÓN

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The scene is that of an evening gallery opening, photographed from the outside, with people spilling from the building onto the pavement. Against the surrounding darkness, the gallery glitters with light. A line of spots above the entranceway highlights the profiles of attendees gathered beneath. People are dressed in lightweight clothing; it is warm enough to linger on the threshold and converse. Behind them, a futuristic space recesses into the background. It is constructed from repeated arches edged in reflective metal, creating a hall-of-mirrors effect. To the right, below a television monitor, a glowing box bears the letters CAYC. These are repeated on one of two illuminated spheres hanging festively in mid-air, forming the acronym of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (Center for Art and Communication). Another photograph reveals the space-age gallery interior in full, showing a chic young couple perusing the displays. It was possibly taken at an opening coinciding with *Arte de Sistemas I* (Systems Art I), a gigantic exhibition featuring an international roster of artists organized by CAYC at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires in 1971.<sup>1</sup> These images capture the early days of CAYC, which had been

<sup>1</sup> Copies of both photographs are held in TGA 839/1/3/3, Charles Harrison Papers, Tate Archive, Tate Britain, London, together with papers connected to the exhibition *El Arte Como Idea en Inglaterra* (Art as Idea from England), which Harrison organized at CAYC in May 1971. The interior shot is identified as an *Arte de Sistemas I* event in Jorge Glusberg, *Arte en la Argentina: Del pop-art a la nueva imagen* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de arte Gaglianone, 1985), 99.

founded in 1968, initially as the Centro de Estudios de Arte y Comunicación, before moving into the bespoke premises at 452 Viamonte in October 1970. They are significant because of the atmosphere they project: that of a sleek, experimental, and aspirational institution, aligned with a technocratic, modernizing agenda, well-placed to extend the internationalizing aims that had powered the Argentine art world of the 1960s.

In the early to mid-1970s, CAYC embarked on a relentless program



Black-and-white photograph of the exterior of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires. Charles Harrison Papers, Tate Archive, Tate Britain, London. Photographer and date unknown. © Tate Images, London.



Black-and-white photograph of the interior of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires. Charles Harrison Papers, Tate Archive, Tate Britain, London. Photographer and date unknown. Image courtesy of Tate Images, London.

of exhibitions in Argentina and internationally, alongside a comparably ambitious publicity drive that flooded the in-boxes of artists, critics, and curators around the world with the organization's distinctive pastel yellow (and sometimes pink, blue, and green) press releases.<sup>2</sup> However, the artistic, social, and political terrain that its projects traversed was deeply volatile. CAYC ultimately proved unable to hold the precarious ground it attempted to bridge during the early 1970s, spanning a variety of intersecting but also competing constructions of internationalism—from those led primarily after World War II by institutions aligned with nation-states, to artist-run initiatives—and emergent forms of what contemporary commentators such as Simón Marchán Fiz identified as “ideological” Conceptualism.<sup>3</sup> This differed from restrictive constructions of Conceptual art, and addressed increasingly violent and repressive political situations in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, fore-

- 2 The British Conceptual artist Ian Breakwell, who featured in several CAYC exhibitions, professed: “I think we have more information of activity in Buenos Aires than we have of activity in England!” Ian Breakwell, letter to Jorge Glusberg, December 1, 1971, TGA 20054/1/28, Ian Breakwell Papers, Tate Archive.
- 3 Simón Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto (1960–1974)*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Editorial A. Corazón, 1974; Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1982), 253.

grounding local rather than international concerns. Unpacking the conflicts that CAYC catalyzed from its founding illuminates how internationalist dynamics endured in the Argentine art world beyond the ruptures of the late 1960s into the 1970s, even as they were overtly challenged.<sup>4</sup> The discourse generated around CAYC reveals that artists were intensely aware that political forms of Conceptual practice were vulnerable to commodification for international consumption. The organization's early years therefore offer a historiographical study that instances Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty's assertion that scholarship on art in Latin America needs to complicate and fragment the ingrained hermeneutic construct of "center" and "periphery."<sup>5</sup> While underscoring the oppressive role this hegemonic power structure played in internationalism, CAYC's history reveals how Latin American artists and critics fought fiercely to contest and control these networks and, notably, the understandings of Conceptualism articulated through them, generating a significant legacy of dialogue and debate.

#### INTERNATIONALIST LEGACIES

CAYC's very existence might seem like something of a paradox, given the prior trajectory of the Argentine art scene. In her foundational scholarship, Giunta traces how the concepts of internationalism and the avant-garde were continuously rewritten in Argentina during the 1960s. Giunta stresses that, while pressures to internationalize undoubtedly came from organizations in the United States and were bound up in an imperialist cultural project to neutralize the influence of Cuba's communist revolution on other Latin American countries, it is crucial to recognize that Argentine institutions wielded considerable agency in articulating their internationalist ambitions.<sup>6</sup> This confluence of external and internal dynamics was encapsulated by the activities of the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella and its arts centers, notably the Centro de Artes

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- 4 Chelsea Haines and Gemma Sharpe pinpoint 1973 as the year when the nation-state and internationalism began to diminish in influence as guiding geopolitical frameworks, due to a combination of factors including the OPEC crisis, General Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile, and the Fourth Non-Aligned Conference, which was undermined by tensions around militarization and nuclearization. Chelsea Haines and Gemma Sharpe, "Introduction: Art, Institutions, and Internationalism, 1945–73," *ARTMargins* 8, no. 2 (2018): 9.
  - 5 Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty, "Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn," *Art in Translation* 9, no. 1 (2017): 125, 131.
  - 6 Andrea Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics: Argentine Art in the Sixties*, trans. Peter Kahn (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós SAICF, 2001; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 12–13.

Visuales (CAV), directed from 1963 by Jorge Romero Brest.<sup>7</sup> The critic and museum administrator had long sought to challenge the constricting construct of “center” and “periphery” by enabling Argentine artists to compete internationally, although the resulting initiatives tended to operate overwhelmingly on the terms of the perceived “center.”<sup>8</sup>

As Giunta and scholars Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman have incisively articulated, after the military coup of 1966 ushered in the dictatorship of General Juan Carlos Onganía, artists increasingly subverted the structures created by institutions like the Di Tella—before rejecting them outright—in order to critique internationalism’s links with US imperialism and to launch attacks on censorship and repression.<sup>9</sup> Onganía’s dictatorship banned political parties, clamped down on universities—including brutally intervening at the University of Buenos Aires on the “Night of the Long Batons” in 1966—and attempted to instigate what political scientist Guillermo O’Donnell characterizes as “bureaucratic authoritarianism,” whereby social and economic controls would, in theory, go hand in hand.<sup>10</sup> The resulting discontent achieved its most powerful expression during the *Córdoba* of May 1969, when an occupation that united workers, students, and trade unionists convulsed the industrial city of Córdoba. If in the early 1960s internationalism signaled outward-looking projects propelled by public and private bodies that reached beyond the nation-state, by the decade’s end the word had become synonymous in Argentina with compromise and inequality.<sup>11</sup> Caught in the crosshairs of both the authoritarian right and

7 Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, 16, 189–241; and John King, *El Di Tella y el desarrollo cultural argentino en la década del sesenta*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de arte Gaglianone, 1985; Buenos Aires: Asunto Impreso Ediciones, 2007), see particularly 87–113.

8 Beverley Adams, “‘Calidad de exportación’: Institutions and the Internationalization of Argentinean Art, 1956–1965,” in *Patrocinio, colección y circulación de las artes: XX Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte*, ed. Gustavo Curiel (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997), 721.

9 Andrea Giunta, “Imaginarios de la desestabilización,” in *Sistemas, acciones y procesos, 1965–1975*, ed. Rodrigo Alonso et al. (Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 2011), 49–58; Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a “Tucumán Arde”: Vanguardia artística y política en el ’68 argentino* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 2000; Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2013). See also Jaime Vindel, *La vida por asalto: Arte, política e historia en Argentina entre 1965 y 2001* (Madrid: Brumaria, 2014).

10 Guillermo O’Donnell, *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Argentina, 1966–1973*, in *Comparative Perspective*, trans. James McGuire and Rae Flory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 39–71.

11 Perry Anderson, “Internationalism: A Breviary,” *New Left Review* 14 (March–April 2002): 6; Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, 9, 288.

the radicalized left, the CAV closed in 1970.<sup>12</sup> That CAYC opened its doors the same year signals that alongside inheriting the Di Tella's internationalizing aims, it faced comparable challenges.<sup>13</sup>

CAYC's early years played out against intensified authoritarian repression and guerrilla resistance. The military, having lost faith in Onganía, executed two further coups in 1970 and 1971, briefly installing Generals Levingston and then Lanusse during an intensely febrile period.<sup>14</sup> Yet, in some respects CAYC represented business as usual in Argentine art. Just as the Di Tella art centers had been financed through the family enterprise, which manufactured cars and domestic appliances, so too was CAYC bankrolled by Modulor (the name emblazoned alongside the CAYC logo in the gallery-opening photograph), a lighting company belonging to its founder Jorge Glusberg. The Argentine anthropologist Néstor García Canclini has traced the imbrication of the business and art sectors in Argentina, positioning CAYC as an exacerbation of this existing trend.<sup>15</sup> CAYC's links with national representatives of soft power, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (ICA), as well as its eagerness to partici-

- 12 CAV's closure has been attributed to several interconnected factors, including political pressure from the dictatorship, the decline of the Di Tella family's fortunes, and Romero Brest's belief that it needed reconstructing to accommodate artists' demands. Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, 286–87.
- 13 María José Herrera traces the overlaps between the two organizations in “Hacia un perfil del arte de sistemas,” in María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi, *Arte de sistemas: El CAYC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional 1969–1977* (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2013), exhibition catalog, 12–14.
- 14 Attempting to forge a way out of this dead end, in 1973 Lanusse reinstated political parties and prepared for an election. This enabled the return from exile in Spain of Juan Perón, who had continued to exert a powerful influence over Argentine politics after his ouster in 1955. Peronism became a channel for disaffection and resistance, spanning dramatically divergent positions from the far left to the far right. Donald C. Hodges, *Argentina, 1943–1976: The National Revolution and Resistance* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 125–26. On becoming president again in 1973, the aging leader had little interest in appeasing his leftist supporters. Perón's death a year later left the country in the hands of his second wife Isabel Martínez de Perón and sinister Minister of Social Welfare José López Rega, who established a paramilitary death squad to quash the guerrilla insurgency. The Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (AAA, or Triple-A) created a framework that the military junta that ruled Argentina between 1976 and 1983 would expand into a merciless system of state disappearance and torture. Patricia Marchak, *God's Assassins: State Terrorism in Argentina in the 1970s* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 3–4. See also Ignacio González Janzen, *La Triple-A* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1986).
- 15 Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1990; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 58–65; and Néstor García Canclini, *La producción simbólica: Teoría y método en sociología del arte* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2017), 96–136.

pate in state-orchestrated biennials, marked the continuation of an established model of internationalism based on the import-export of artists and exhibitions.<sup>16</sup> This has led to accusations of cultural homogenization, notably by the artist and writer Luis Camnitzer, for whom CAYC represented precisely the kind of compromised internationalism so resoundingly rejected by radicalized Argentine artists in the late 1960s.<sup>17</sup> However, while Glusberg cultivated figures associated with British and American Conceptual art including Charles Harrison and Joseph Kosuth, in the early to mid-1970s CAYC did also promote politicized forms of Conceptualism that addressed repression in Argentina and Latin America more widely, as theorized contemporaneously by Marchán Fiz and subsequently elaborated by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Camnitzer.<sup>18</sup>

Artists and critics consistently challenged CAYC's organizational politics. Glusberg was a domineering, problematic figure who casts a troubling shadow over his institution's activities. CAYC's endurance during the 1976–83 dictatorship alone, during which the military junta murdered and disappeared an estimated 30,000 people, constitutes cause for concern. The performance scholar Diana Taylor stresses that, during this period, “the universities, the cultural centers, the news services, and government agencies were all run by military men.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, there is concrete evidence that Glusberg received support from the junta. García Canclini cites a telegram that its leader General Jorge Rafael Videla sent congratulating the Grupo de los Trece (Group of the Thirteen)—an all-male unit of artists who became CAYC's main representatives in the mid to late 1970s—on winning the main prize for Argentina at the 1977 Bienal de São Paulo.<sup>20</sup> In 1978, Modulor received a valuable contract to

16 The first exhibition at CAYC's Viamonte premises was of photographs from MoMA's collection, featuring Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand. Jorge Glusberg, *Nueva fotografía U.S.A.* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1970), exhibition catalog.

17 Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 248.

18 See Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual*; Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960–1980,” in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), exhibition catalog, 53–71, which is an expanded version of “Blue Print Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America,” in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Waldo Rasmussen (New York: MoMA, 1993), exhibition catalog, 156–69; and Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*.

19 Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's “Dirty War”* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 99.

20 García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 63. A photocopy of the telegram can be found in Box 17, Folder 2 (1 of 2), Felipe Ehrenberg Papers (M1218), Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University. Initial members of the Grupo de los Trece (later Grupo



provide stadium lighting when Argentina hosted the World Cup, an event Videla exploited to the hilt to distract international attention from the dictatorship's crimes.<sup>21</sup> Although Katarzyna Cytlak notes that these incidents, together with Glusberg's discredited directorship of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) in the 1990s, occurred after what the French critic Pierre Restany described as CAYC's "heroic times," distrust of Glusberg among artists is on record as early as his failed attempt to organize a CAYC exhibition at the 1971 Bienal de São Paulo.<sup>22</sup> Cytlak advocates a more "multifaceted" understanding of CAYC as a transnational and transcultural entity that is "more difficult to evaluate" than commentators have previously allowed.<sup>23</sup> Here, I propose that when approached as a record of interconnected debate and dissensus, CAYC's dispersed archive of catalogs, press releases, and correspondence forms a rich repository of discussion about the limits of internationalism, and the danger that works of politically engaged Conceptualism could be packaged for an international audience in ways that might provide critical capital for the very regimes they challenged.

## FROM INTERNATIONALISM TO "SYSTEMS ART"

During the early 1970s, CAYC negotiated an uneasy entente between internationalist strategies and forms of artistic critique that sought to counter precisely these models. Glusberg tried to achieve this balance through his formulation of "systems art," designed to maintain the connections fostered by international exchange during the 1960s, but in a way that sought to re-route and de-hierarchize its networks—looking for example to Brazil and Chile as much as the United States. CAYC mounted

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CAYC) included Jacques Bedel, Luis Bénédict, Gregorio Dujovny, Victor Grippo, Jorge González Mir, Luis Pazos, Alberto Pellegrino, Alfredo Portillos, Juan Carlos Romero, Julio Teich, and Glusberg himself.

- 21 Deploying the term "percepticide," coined by Argentine psychoanalyst Juan Carlos Kusnetzoff to characterize the dictatorship's attack on the population's perception, Taylor argues that this was a key aspect of the dictatorship's cultivation of spectacular screens like the World Cup. Taylor, *Disappearing Acts*, 10, 112–14.
- 22 Katarzyna Cytlak, "Hacia el arte latinoamericano globalizado. La auto-invencción del CAYC—Centro de Arte y Comunicación—desde la perspectiva transmoderna y transregional," *Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo* 5, no. 1 (2018): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1344/regac2018.1.04>; and Pierre Restany, letter to Jorge Glusberg, November 4, 1978, Box 1, Folder 13, Gregory Battcock Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (AAA), Washington, DC. Glusberg's MNBA directorship ended amidst allegations that he had charged artists large amounts of money to exhibit at the institution. Alina Tortosa, "The Glusberg Affair in Focus," *Buenos Aires Herald on Sunday* 4, no. 148, December 14, 2003, 13.
- 23 Cytlak, "Hacia el arte latinoamericano globalizado," 57.





Photograph of the exterior of the exhibition *Arte y Cibernética*, Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1969. Photographer and date unknown. Image courtesy of Colección Centro de Estudios Espigas – Fundación Espigas, Buenos Aires.

its first exhibition in 1969, with *Arte y Cibernética* (Art and Cybernetics) at the Galería Bonino, followed by the interdisciplinary event program *Argentina Inter-medios* at the Teatro Opera.<sup>24</sup> As the former exhibition indicates, CAYC initially engaged with cybernetics, invoking its emphasis on technological feedback loops and human-machine interactions. This interest subsequently dissolved into the more generalized notion of systems art, an umbrella term that in Glusberg's formulation encompassed idea art, ecological art, *arte povera*, political art, and cybernetic art, and thus embraced both Conceptual art and Conceptualism more widely.<sup>25</sup>

Systems art provided an identity for multiple interlinked CAYC exhibitions in the early to mid-1970s that traveled across Latin America and Europe. As Elena Shtromberg notes in her analysis of parallel elaborations of "art systems" in Brazil, Glusberg's pivot to "systems" echoed—without referencing directly—Jack Burnham's influential notion of "systems esthetics."<sup>26</sup> On close inspection, Glusberg's capacious list

24 Jorge Glusberg, *Argentina inter-medios* (Buenos Aires: Teatro Opera, 1969), exhibition catalog. In April 1971, a subsequent iteration of the *Arte y Cibernética* show united results from a collaboration with the technical college Escuela ORT in Buenos Aires with artists affiliated with the Computer Arts Society in London, including Gustav Metzger and Manfred Mohr. Jorge Glusberg, *Arte y cibernética: San Francisco, Londres, Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1971), exhibition catalog.

25 "El arte de sistemas incluye las últimas tendencias del arte de la segunda mitad de este siglo. Arte como idea, arte ecológico, arte pobre, arte cibernético, arte de propuestas, arte político, se agruparán bajo el término arte de sistemas." Centro de Arte y Comunicación press release, "Arte de sistemas en el Museo de Arte Moderno," GT-54, June 28, 1971, Box 1, Folder 3, CAYC, Collection of Press Releases and Ephemera, 1969–1977, Museum of Modern Art Library, New York.

26 Elena Shtromberg, *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 3.

proves very different from Burnham's systems esthetics, a definition derived from the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy's general system theory (linked to but distinct from cybernetics), which the American artist and critic applied specifically to artworks exploring interconnected organic and social relations.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, Glusberg's systems art was decidedly baggy, referencing a variety of artistic activities while offering a way of bringing the work of the Grupo de los Trece together collectively. Despite this heterogeneity, CAYC's initial activities focused particularly on British and American Conceptual art, seemingly reiterating an internationalist import-export mode of exhibition display through which the "center" constructs and dominates the "periphery."<sup>28</sup> Equally, Glusberg's attempts to develop systems art were more fractious and opportunistic than Romero Brest's diplomatic internationalism, and they involved no small degree of appropriation and divergence. His efforts reveal the challenges entailed in continuing the internationalist projects of the 1960s into the 1970s, as well as the complex power dynamics involved.

Glusberg's interactions with Lucy Lippard are a case in point. The two met when the American critic and curator visited Argentina in September 1968 to act as a juror, alongside the French writer Jean Clay, for what proved to be the controversial *Materiales: Nuevas Técnicas, Nueva Expresión* (Materials: New Techniques, New Expression) prize, the submissions to which were exhibited at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.<sup>29</sup> Glusberg introduced Lippard and Clay to some of the Rosario-based artists who would participate in the anti-dictatorship projects *Ciclo de Arte Experimental* (Cycle of Experimental Art) and *Tucumán Arde* later that year.<sup>30</sup> In October, the Grupo de Artistas de Vanguardia commenced the *Ciclo de Arte Experimental*. It featured iconic manifestations of institutional critique, such as Graciela Carnevale's imprison-

27 Jack Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968): 30–35.

28 Natalia Pineau traces how the CAYC consistently navigated this binary in "El CAYC: La reconstrucción de un programa institucional," *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers* 1 (September 2007), 28, <https://icaa.mfah.org/files/original/9d91242785f65efefafb3e968787108c25fe885a.pdf>.

29 Lippard and Clay were pressured by the industrial sponsors to select works made from particular materials. Pip Day, "Locating 2,972,453: Lucy R. Lippard in Argentina," in *From Conceptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows, 1969–74*, ed. Cornelia Butler et al. (London: Afterall, 2012), 80–81; Lucy Lippard and Jean Clay, "Premios con variaciones," interview by Jorge Glusberg, *Análisis* 8, no. 398 (September 25, 1968): 47–48.

30 Longoni and Mestman note that the contact with Lippard and Clay played a crucial role in the rapid international circulation of these artists' work. Longoni and Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde,"* 143.

ment of her audience inside a glass-fronted gallery. *Tucumán Arde*, meanwhile, saw artists instigate a consciousness-raising information circuit about the starvation caused by Onganía's attempted rationalization of the sugarcane industry in Tucumán. It featured a display of documentary materials at the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) trade union building in Rosario (the police closed a second exhibition in Buenos Aires).<sup>31</sup> Both projects have become synonymous with the break from Di Tella-style internationalism, and with radical new forms of politically engaged Conceptualism.<sup>32</sup> Although Lippard did not experience these works directly, she subsequently credited her time in Argentina with her own politicization.<sup>33</sup>

Glusberg and Lippard continued to correspond, and by 1970 they had agreed that Lippard would curate an iteration of her "numbers shows"—557,087 at the Seattle World's Fair (1969) and 955,000 (1970) in Vancouver—for CAYC.<sup>34</sup> The 2,972,453 exhibition contained twelve Conceptual artists not displayed at either Seattle or Vancouver, all of whom were then based in North America and Europe.<sup>35</sup> Lippard instructed each to send "2-d" works consisting of "paper and/or photographs," stipulating "no objects" because of transportation costs.<sup>36</sup> Installation shots of 2,972,453, which opened in December 1970, show photographs, diagrams, and pieces of paper pinned neatly to the walls of CAYC. Although the exhibition concept was Lippard's and she had undertaken all the curatorial labor, Glusberg assumed joint credit in press releases and newspaper coverage.<sup>37</sup> While this, Lippard reflected, was "bad enough," what proved especially upsetting was that

31 Longoni and Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde,"* 178–236.

32 Miguel A. López argues that *Tucumán Arde* has become overdetermined in this respect, particularly following its inclusion in *documenta 12* (2007). Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?," trans. Josephine Watson, *Afterall* 23 (Spring 2010): 5–21.

33 Lucy Lippard, "Preface," in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger, 1973; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 8. See also Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Lucy Lippard's Feminist Labor," in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 127–71.

34 The exhibitions were titled after the population of each city where they occurred.

35 The artists were Eleanor Antin, Siah Armajani, David Askevold, Stanley Brouwn, Victor Burgin, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Don Celender, James Collins, Christopher Cook, Gilbert & George, Ira Joel Haber, and Richards Jarden.

36 Lucy Lippard, template letter for 2,972,453, August 4, 1970. Box 42, Folder 41, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA.

37 Centro de Arte y Comunicación press release, "Arte conceptual," GT-20-70, November 28, 1970, Box 42, Folder 41, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA. Lippard also spotted that Glusberg had changed the title to "Conceptual Art," annotating this release with an exasperated cross.



Black-and-white photograph of the exhibition 2,972,453, curated by Lucy R. Lippard, Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, 1970. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

when the catalog arrived, she discovered Glusberg had been “fucking around” with the arrangement of the artists’ works.<sup>38</sup> Participants had been told to send representations of their practices for the loose index cards that would, as for 557,087 and 955,000, form the catalog. Lippard intended that this catalog would “lead a life of its own separate from the show,” constituting a compilation of works—even an independent artwork—in its own right.<sup>39</sup> For Lippard, “the catalogues of all these shows together . . . may be considered as a single growing entity.”<sup>40</sup> But by “uniformizing” the design, Glusberg had made this

38 Lucy Lippard, letter to Jorge Glusberg, March 28, 1971, Box 42, Folder 41, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA.

39 Lippard, template letter for 2,972,453, August 4, 1970.

40 Lucy Lippard, in 2,972,453, trans. Raúl Colbert (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1970), exhibition catalog, n.p.

“impossible.”<sup>41</sup> Equally, while Lippard had welcomed a card from Glusberg himself, she had not been prepared for his insertion of an entire essay.<sup>42</sup>

Without excusing Glusberg’s behavior, the episode does represent an attempt on his part to draw connections and correlations, and to formulate a lateral “systems” approach. The exhibition catalog reflects that

the “mobility and immediate geographic range” of the works in 2,972,453, underscored by Lippard’s approach to its organization, enabled “rapid dispersion,” which made “international development and inter-relationships [sic] clearer.”<sup>43</sup> But although Lippard’s experience in Argentina decisively reoriented her political outlook, she did not make an immediate connection between the practices she had been exposed to and

the impetus behind 2,972,453, remarking of a parallel attempt to create a card catalogue for Argentine artists: “from the people I’ve talked to there is not enough Argentine conceptual art to fill 20 cards, or is there?”<sup>44</sup> Glusberg used his essay to reflect on “the collectivization of conceptual art,” gesturing towards a shared project that had the potential to extend across multiple geographies, even if 2,972,453 remained focused primarily on activity in North America and Europe.<sup>45</sup>

The reception of 2,972,453 underscores what Giunta describes as the ephemerality of Argentine efforts to create international dialogues in the 1960s.<sup>46</sup> The magazine *Primera Plana* reported that the exhibi-



Exhibition catalog for 2,972,453, curated by Lucy R. Lippard, Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, 1970. Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou. Photograph by the author. © Lucy R. Lippard.

41 Lippard, letter to Glusberg, March 28, 1971.

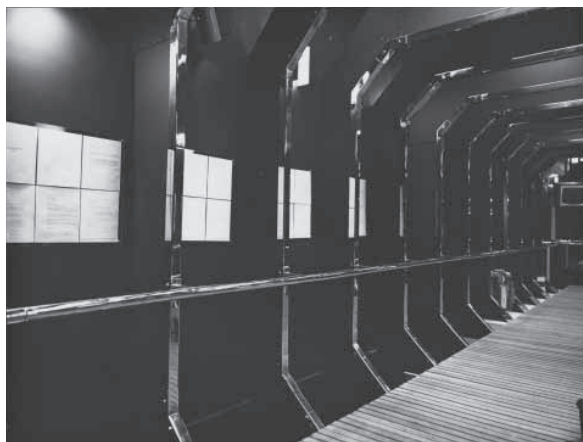
42 Lippard, letter to Glusberg, March 28, 1971.

43 Introductory statement, unattributed, 2,972,453, n.p.

44 Lucy Lippard, letter to Jorge Glusberg, July 17, 1970, Box 42, Folder 41, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA.

45 Glusberg, in 2,972,453, n.p. See also Jorge Glusberg, “Art Systems/El arte de sistemas,” in *Art as Idea from England (El arte como idea en Inglaterra)* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1971), exhibition catalog, n.p.

46 Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, 241.



Black-and-white photograph of the exhibition 2,972,453, curated by Lucy R. Lippard, Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, 1970. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

tion opening did not attract much of a public beyond a “hairy intellectual” or two.<sup>47</sup> Equally, hegemonic biases proved hard to shift. When organizing the exhibition *El Arte como Idea en Inglaterra* (Art as Idea from England), which appeared at CAYC in May 1971, the British art historian Charles Harrison apologized to the artist Sue Arrowsmith that the show was “rather out in the sticks—I mean, it is not New York.”<sup>48</sup> The exchanges around 2,972,453 indicate that Glusberg was attempting to counter such inequalities and reductive attitudes, even if his approach was sometimes abrasively opportunistic. However, in presenting systems art as a wide framework that could encompass a constellation of activity and treat Argentine art on equal terms with that produced in North America and Europe, CAYC risked replicating rather than destabilizing the embedded imbalances between art worlds.

### CONCEPTUALISM AND IDEOLOGY

CAYC’s first major attempt to present systems art in exhibition form was *Arte de Sistemas I* in 1971, for which Glusberg combined artists he had encountered through international contacts such as Harrison and Lippard with conceptualist practice from across Latin America.<sup>49</sup> But it was *Arte de Sistemas II* of 1972, in particular a section entitled *Arte y ideología: CAYC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology: CAYC in the Open Air), that most explicitly tried to bridge internationalism with localized

47 “Un arte para archivar,” *Primera Plana* 411, December 15, 1970, 61, clipping in Box 42, Folder 41, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA.

48 Charles Harrison, letter to Sue Arrowsmith, September 17, 1970, TGA 839/1/3/3, Charles Harrison Papers, Tate Archive, Tate Britain, London.

49 María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi, “Arte de sistemas: El CAYC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional,” in Herrera and Marchesi, *Arte de sistemas*, 8.

Conceptualism.<sup>50</sup> Arte de Sistemas II was a tripartite show; one of the sections occurred at the Viamonte galleries, and a second—featuring “international” participants, including Eleanor Antin, Vito Acconci, David Medalla, and Ed Ruscha, among many others—at the Museo de Arte Moderno.<sup>51</sup> The third, and most significant, section was Arte e ideología, which featured Argentine practitioners and occupied the Plaza Roberto Arlt.

Arte e ideología was designed to be participatory, rejecting the “elite environments” of museums and galleries in order to establish “dialogue with the people.”<sup>52</sup> A plastic bag printed with a design by Joseph Beuys, featuring a diagram mapping the differences between collective democracy and political rule, contained the exhibition catalog. On the opening day, a carnival atmosphere took hold as crowds descended on the square, where they encountered installations such as Victor Grippo and Jorge Gamarra’s giant oven, from which the artists distributed freshly baked bread. This resonated with left-wing condemnations of the military’s agricultural policies, referencing the hunger and poverty of Argentina’s rural population. Juan Carlos Romero, together with Roberto Duarte Laferrière, Eduardo Leonetti, Luis Pazos, and Ricardo Roux, presented *El juego lúgubre* (*The Macabre Game*), which consisted of a noose hanging from a makeshift scaffold and directions for a satirical game based on class conflict. Pazos also showed *Proyecto de monumento al prisionero político desaparecido* (*Project for a Monument for the Disappeared Political Prisoner*), part of a series in which participants lay in formations on the ground, using their bodies to claim ownership of public space.<sup>53</sup>

In the early 1970s, the Spanish critic Simón Marchán Fiz pro-

50 For an illuminating comparison with the Colombian context, see Gina McDaniel Tarver, “Art Does Not Fit Here: Colombian Conceptual Art between the International ‘New Avant-Garde’ and Colombian Politics,” *Third Text* 26, no. 6 (November 2012): 729–44. Tarver addresses these tensions with regard to CAYC’s participation in the Coltejer biennials in Medellín, in *The New Iconoclasts: From Art of a New Reality to Conceptual Art in Colombia, 1961–1975* (Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes, Universidad de los Andes, 2016), 131–207.

51 Centro de Arte y Comunicación press release, “Participantes en la muestra Arte de sistemas II (internacional),” GT-163, September 13, 1972, Box 1, Folder 4, CAYC, Collection of Press Releases and Ephemera, 1969–1977, MoMA, New York.

52 Jorge Glusberg, “Arte e ideología en CAYC al aire libre,” in *Arte e ideología: CAYC al aire libre; Arte de sistemas II* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1972), n.p.

53 For a detailed account of the exhibition, see Eve Kalyva, “Art and Violence in the Open Air: The Activities of CAYC,” in *Image and Text in Conceptual Art: Critical Operations in Context* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 80–103. See also the individual artist entries in *Arte e ideología*, n.p.





Luis Pazos. *Arte e ideología, CAYC al aire libre. Acción colectiva en la plaza Roberto Arlt, 1972*. Silver gelatin print on paper. Image courtesy of Archivo Fotográfico, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Depósito indefinido de la Fundación Museo Reina Sofía, 2017). © Luis Pazos.

vided an analysis of work in this vein. Harrison promoted a very specific definition of analytic Conceptual art in his writings and exhibitions, linked to philosophies of language and isolated to a small group of practitioners working in Britain and the United States between 1967 and 1972.<sup>54</sup> But figures such as Lippard were by the early 1970s already moving toward a much more geographically and intellectually expanded formulation of Conceptualism that incorporated political and institutional critique.<sup>55</sup> Comparably responding to these dramatic shifts, Marchán Fiz highlighted the diverse practices that had emerged around Conceptual art, and sought to differentiate them.<sup>56</sup> He distinguished between Conceptual art focused on linguistic philosophy and that which maintained an interest in materiality, as well as identifying a third strand of “ideological conceptualism.”<sup>57</sup> Conceptualism included resistances against the cultural “colonialism” of Anglo-American Conceptual art and was particularly evident in Argentina, although Marchán Fiz noted that it existed in other places and occurred in multiple modes.<sup>58</sup>

The model of politically engaged Conceptualism has subsequently been developed by Ramírez and Camnitzer. For Ramírez, Conceptualism “cannot be seen as a style or movement” but is rather “a strategy of anti-discourses whose evasive tactics call into question both the fetishization of art and its systems of production and distribution in late capitalist society.”<sup>59</sup> Yet while Ramírez and Camnitzer identify specifically Latin

54 Charles Harrison, “Conceptual Art and the Suppression of the Beholder,” in *Essays on Art & Language* (1991; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 29.

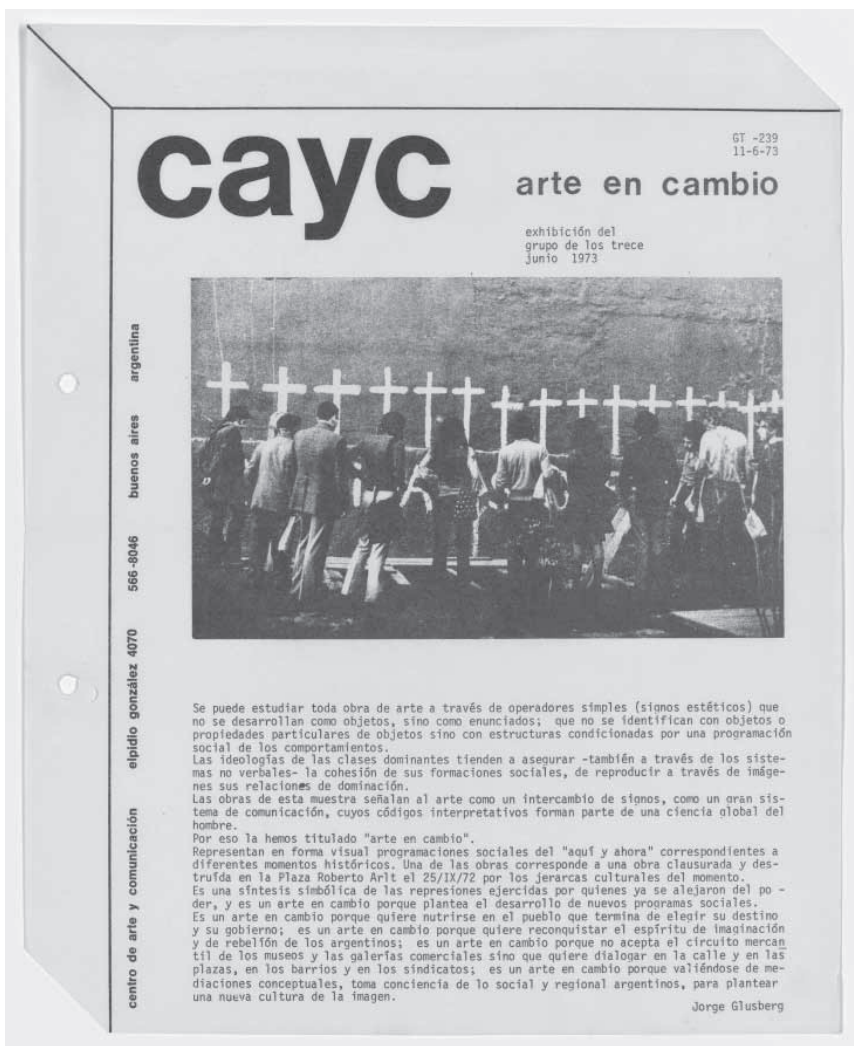
55 See Lippard, *Six Years*. Nizan Shaked traces the shift from Conceptual art to Conceptualism under the impact of the US civil rights movement, Black Power, the feminist movement, and gay liberation in *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

56 Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual*, 249.

57 Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual*, 253.

58 Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual*, 269.

59 Ramírez, “Tactics for Thriving on Adversity,” 53.



Press release: Arte en Cambio: Exhibición del Grupo de los Trece Junio 1973. Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 11, 1973. Museum of Modern Art Library, New York, Object number A300341365. © 2020. Digital image courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

American manifestations of Conceptualism, Longoni has stressed, in conversation with the art historian Jaime Vindel, both resistance to the term “Conceptualism” among artists in Argentina and the extensive use of Conceptual approaches by practitioners pursuing political and ideological ends across multiple geographies.<sup>60</sup> In his analysis of CAYC’s exhibitions, Rodrigo Alonso proposes that the “decentralized perspective” expounded in Longoni and Vindel’s exchanges elsewhere best encapsulates the multi-

60 Ana Longoni, “Respuesta a Jaime Vindel,” *Ramona* 82 (2008): 20, <http://70.32.114.117/gsd/collect/revista/revistas/ramona82.pdf>.

farious, emphatically *transnational* activity briefly held together by the organization during the early 1970s, which sought to challenge the inequalities of internationalism while nonetheless engaging in artistic exchange between different countries.<sup>61</sup> Glusberg proposed that the works in Arte e ideología contained ideological and political significations fundamentally shaped by their specific contexts.<sup>62</sup> Working in Europe or the United States, Glusberg argued, was “not the same as being an artist in a Third World country,” because “the role of the artist varies and is conditioned by the manner of its insertion in each system of power relations.”<sup>63</sup> As such, he concluded, art produced in Latin America was inextricable from its immediate political situation. While Camnitzer argues that CAYC ignored the lessons of *Tucumán Arde*, at least initially, Glusberg consciously attempted to link the organization to the earlier fusion of art and politics in Argentina.<sup>64</sup>

The critique that flourished in the Plaza did not go unnoticed. After less than 48 hours, police closed the exhibition, confiscated the works, and charged Glusberg with subversion under article 236/2 of the Argentine Penal Code.<sup>65</sup> The most offending piece was *La realidad subterránea* (*The Underground Reality*) by Laferrière, Leonetti, Pazos, and Roux, created in a belowground area of the square. Within this area the artists placed photographs of Holocaust victims alongside sixteen crosses whitewashed onto a wall. The crosses referenced a group of political prisoners who had been shot without trial on August 22, 1972, at the Almirante Marcos A. Zar airport in Trelew, for attempting to escape Rawson prison. Ostensibly at least this protest against the Trelew Massacre, a traumatic occurrence that had been subjected to immediate censorship, chimed with Glusberg's conviction that “systems art” ideally positioned artists to respond to their immediate social and political situations.<sup>66</sup>

Yet although individual artists in the Plaza Roberto Arlt channeled the revolutionary spirit unleashed in Argentina during 1968,

61 Rodrigo Alonso, “Sistemas, acciones y procesos, 1965–1975,” in Alonso et al., *Sistemas, acciones y procesos*, 22.

62 Glusberg, “Arte e ideología en CAYC al aire libre,” n.p.

63 Glusberg, “Arte e ideología en CAYC al aire libre,” n.p.

64 Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 248. See also Jorge Glusberg, “Argentina: Art and Dissolution,” *Art and Artists* 4, no. 7 (October 1969): 12.

65 Centro de Arte y Comunicación, “Comunicado no. 7,” c. 1972, Box 1, Folder 1, CAYC, Collection of Press Releases and Ephemera, 1969–1977, MoMA, New York.

66 See Tomás Eloy Martínez, *La pasión según Trelew*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Granica Editor, 1973; Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, 2009). This book was banned shortly after publication.

CAYC's overarching institutional position was more ambivalent. Glusberg had to explain each work to the authorities during a lengthy defense. CAYC's communications—and possibly Glusberg's presentation—crafted the message that the sixteen crosses were not an integral part of the artwork, but rather graffiti added by the public. The exhibition itself had therefore not set out to incite resistance.<sup>67</sup> Such a move is understandable, given the danger, but it signals the limits of CAYC's reach, although the organization did later acknowledge the artwork.<sup>68</sup> Some participants, moreover, doubted from the beginning whether they had Glusberg's full support. Romero, then a member of Grupo de los Trece, recalls that the artists making *La realidad subterránea* feared that Glusberg would erase the crosses memorializing the Trelew victims before the exhibition even opened.<sup>69</sup> Romero concludes that the reason for the strong collective statement made by Arte e ideología was that Glusberg simply could not control a busy square filled with performances and theatrical interventions, freeing artists to act.<sup>70</sup> Vindel rightly stresses the importance of distinguishing the practices of the individual artists featured in CAYC exhibitions from Glusberg's agenda.<sup>71</sup> The open-air exhibition certainly exemplifies how practitioners could use CAYC's structure to pursue their own aims. However, for all the apparent capaciousness of Glusberg's systems art model, his actions in 1972 demonstrated the limits of this paradigm and the compromises necessitated by CAYC's attempts to position itself as a promoter and exporter of art in Argentina and, by extension, Latin America.<sup>72</sup>

67 CAYC, "Comunicado no. 7," c. 1972.

68 Centro de Arte y Comunicación press release, "Arte en cambio," GT-239, June 11, 1973, Box 1, Folder 5, CAYC, Collection of Press Releases and Ephemera, 1969–1977, MoMA, New York. See image on page 66 of this article.

69 Juan Carlos Romero, interview by Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, Buenos Aires, August 16, 1993, in Longoni and Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde,"* 448–49.

70 Romero, interview by Longoni and Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde,"* 448.

71 Vindel, *La vida por asalto*, 234–35. Julia Detchon argues that the Grupo de los Trece smuggled political critique into the 1977 Bienal de São Paulo, in "Signs, Systems, Contexts: The Centro de Arte y Comunicación at the São Paulo Bienal, 1977" (ICAA Documents Project Working Papers 5, December 2017), <https://icaa.mfah.org/files/original/d5cd9746954287f44bfc1231f419097c9ca3bcdd.pdf>.

72 Conversely, notwithstanding the limitations of the CAYC model, Glusberg received an outpouring of international support from artists in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, and Hungary, many of whom had featured in its program, as well as significant support from within Argentina. This was documented in statements and a signed letter published in a series of "Comunicados" circulated to CAYC's mailing list. For the letter, see Centro de Arte y Comunicación, "Comunicado no. 9," c. 1972, Box 1, Folder 1, CAYC, Collection of Press Releases and Ephemera, 1969–1977, MoMA, New York.

## DISSOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT

The suspicions as to Glusberg's intentions in *Arte e ideología* echoed debates that had occurred the previous year. Glusberg had attempted to present an iteration of the *Arte de Sistemas I* exhibition at the eleventh Bienal de São Paulo in 1971. The Bienal had been the focus of a prominent and successful international boycott in 1969, after the military dictatorship that had assumed power in Brazil during 1964 began to implement censorship, torture, and murder, suspending civil rights with the decree Ato Institucional Número Cinco (AI-5) of 1968.<sup>73</sup> Glusberg's invitation to participate prompted outcry among artists in the Latin American diaspora, notably those involved in the artist groups Museo Latinoamericano and Movimiento por la Independencia Cultural de Latino América (MICLA) in New York.<sup>74</sup> The collaborative publication *Contrabienal* resulted, spearheaded by Gordon Matta-Clark, featuring artworks and texts from figures including Camnitzer, Felipe Ehrenberg, Léon Ferrari, Liliana Porter, Romero, Rufino Tamayo, and Edgardo Antonio Vigo. It included a statement maintaining that the Bienal used third-party intermediaries such as embassies, commissioners, and businesspeople to invite artists as a way of attempting to circumvent rejection.<sup>75</sup> Glusberg, in turn, rationalized his decision by using the vocabulary of internationalism, stressing the importance of breaking with "the isolation to which they [Brazilian artists] are subjected by police power."<sup>76</sup> Such a view failed to convince, and the internationalist model Glusberg

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The closure of *Arte e ideología* was covered in the international art press, including in "Le CAYC accusé d'incitation à la subversion," *Art Press*, no. 3 (March/April 1973), 26.

- 73 See Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). On the Bienal de São Paulo, see Isobel Whitelegg, "Brazil, Latin America: The World," *Third Text* 26, no. 1 (2012): 131–40; and Isobel Whitelegg, "The Bienal de São Paulo: Unseen/Undone (1969–1981)," *Afterall* 22 (Autumn/Winter 2009): 106–13.
- 74 See Luis Camnitzer, "The Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA" (1992), in *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias*, ed. Rachel Weiss (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 164–74.
- 75 Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA, excerpt from the invitation letter to participate in *Contrabienal*, in *Contrabienal* (New York: Museo Latinoamericano and MICLA, 1971), n.p. See also Aimé Iglesias Lukin, "Contrabienal: Latin American Art, Politics and Identity in New York, 1969–1971," *Artforum Bulletin* 3, no. 2 (2014): 68–82, <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol3/iss2/5/>.
- 76 Jorge Glusberg, "Why I originally decided to participate in the São Paulo Bienal with 'Art Systems' and why I now decided not to participate," postmarked June 15, 1971, TGA 20054/1/28, Ian Breakwell Papers, Tate Archive. The circular appears in Spanish in *Contrabienal*, n.p.

advocated appeared increasingly outmoded, reliant on bureaucracies such as biennials that were closely linked to the nation-state.<sup>77</sup> The artists in *Contrabienal* recognized the compromises involved in such mechanisms and attempted to break with them.<sup>78</sup>

As the 1970s progressed, CAYC increasingly bypassed art “centers” such as New York, forging links in Eastern Europe and further expanding on earlier collaborations with the Computer Technique Group in Japan.<sup>79</sup> Yet however tempting it might be to see CAYC as pioneering a model of globalized relationality that ultimately superseded internationalism, the latter remained CAYC’s determining context. In the 1960s, debate focused on the question of whether Argentine artists could retain their individual identity without being subsumed within international circuits, in ways that acknowledged but also reiterated imperialist implications of belatedness.<sup>80</sup> CAYC might have sought to create lateral rather than hierarchical relations between practitioners across the globe, but in the 1970s the international stage continued to be a site of compromise as much as of solidarity. In 1974, the New York branch of the Art & Language group published a condemnation of CAYC’s strategy with regard to the large-scale group show *Homenaje a Salvador Allende* (Homage to Salvador Allende). The exhibition was envisaged as an expression of international solidarity against the brutal military coup in Chile of the year before, but Art & Language warned that CAYC’s aim to unite artists from Latin America with those working in the United States and Europe risked reinforcing entrenched art-world inequalities.<sup>81</sup> This critique itself risks replicating binary models, but nonetheless it underscores how CAYC’s activities had become an intense point

77 Haines and Sharpe, “Introduction,” 7.

78 Ironically, the Grupo de los Trece withdrew their participation from the 1973 Bienal, citing the censorship of *Arte e ideología*. The Grupo de los Trece, letter to Juan Carlos Puig, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, June 25, 1973, TGA786/5/4/9, Folder 1 of 5, Barbara Reise Papers, Tate Archive.

79 Cytlak, “Hacia el arte latinoamericano globalizado,” 68–75; and Jorge Glusberg, Angel Kalenberg, and Jasia Reichardt, *Arte y cibernetica* (Buenos Aires and Montevideo: Centro de Arte y Comunicación and Comisión Nacional de Artes Plásticas, 1970), exhibition catalog. See also Katarzyna Cytlak, “International Open Encounters on Video: The Role of the Art and Communication Center (CAYC) in Buenos Aires in International Video Art Networks during the 1970s,” in *Early Video Art and Experimental Films Networks*, ed. François Bovier (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2017), 137–66.

80 See, for example, Lawrence Alloway, “Latin America and International Art,” *Art in America* 53, no. 3 (June 1965): 64–77.

81 Art & Language, “To the Commission of Homage to Salvador Allende” (1974), in “Brainstorming—New York,” *Art-Language* 3, no. 2 (May 1975): 38.

of focus for debates about internationalism, specifically the issues of co-optation and the suppression of autochthonous expression.

Although not an official state organization, CAYC proved unable to distance itself clearly from the dictatorships in Argentina and also relied on organizations linked to other repressive nation-states. By the end of the 1970s, disentangling the organization from its director had become impossible. The artist Felipe Ehrenberg privately related an encounter with Glusberg at one of CAYC's video festivals in Mexico during 1978, which he described as "linked up" with the country's "most reactionary forces . . . right wing art world, private television consortium, conservative press . . . etc. . . . yek!"<sup>82</sup> Elsewhere, Ehrenberg expressed his "alarm" at CAYC's claim to represent Latin American artistic production internationally.<sup>83</sup> The artist voiced these concerns publicly in a letter to the magazine *Artes Visuales*, published by Mexico's Museo de Arte Moderno/INBA. Responding to the magazine's request for opinions on video art, Ehrenberg accused *Artes Visuales* of encouraging dependency among Latin American artists on metropolitan, international models, citing CAYC as an example of this (compounded for Ehrenberg by CAYC's promotion of video art in the late 1970s).<sup>84</sup> In the context of US-supported repression in nation-states such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile, internationalism risked subordination to imperialism and threatened to compromise the critiques of political systems articulated by artists aligned with Conceptualism.

In 1971, *Contrabienal* had included a statement from Argentine artists, including Léon Ferrari, Antonio Berni, Luis Felipe Noé, and Martha Peluffo, questioning whether it was possible to conceive of an avant-garde in a country that had institutionalized repression, torture, and assassination.<sup>85</sup> While immediately referencing the Brazilian context,

82 Felipe Ehrenberg, letter to David Mayor, January 1, 1978, Mayor/Fluxshoe/Beau Geste Press (BGP) Archive, TGA 815/1/1/5, Tate Archive.

83 "En éste trataré de formular . . . la alarma que me ha causado la presencia del CAYC en el campo de la cultura." Felipe Ehrenberg, letter to Marilia Saboya de Albuquerque, March 4, 1979. In a draft, Ehrenberg specified Glusberg's "ideology" ("*ideología*") as the cause for concern. Felipe Ehrenberg, draft letter to Marilia Saboya de Albuquerque, undated. Both letters are found in Box 17, Folder 5, Felipe Ehrenberg Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University.

84 Felipe Ehrenberg, letter to Beatriz Moyano, assistant editor of *Artes Visuales*, January 26, 1978, in "Respuestas a un cuestionario y otras cuestiones," *Artes Visuales*, March–May 1978, 21–22.

85 "Es concebible un salón de arte de pretendida vanguardia en un país donde se ha institucionalizado como método de gobierno la represión, la tortura y el asesinato? Es ésta una vanguardia? Vanguardia de qué?" Antonio Berni et al., "Argentina," in *Contrabienal*, n.p.



their statement resonates with the dictatorships between 1966 and 1983 in Argentina. By the mid to late 1970s, the uneasy compromise during CAYC's early years, between internationalism and the kind of politically engaged work connected with Conceptualism, had collapsed. The more productive possibilities of international solidarity it had modeled had failed to hold out against imperialism and repression. As a historiographical case study, however, the organization offers valuable insight into the discursive formations that emerged around internationalism and Conceptualism during the early 1970s, showing how these were not always diametrically opposed, but were shaped through constant interplay and contestation.